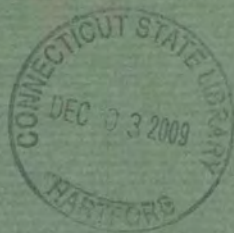


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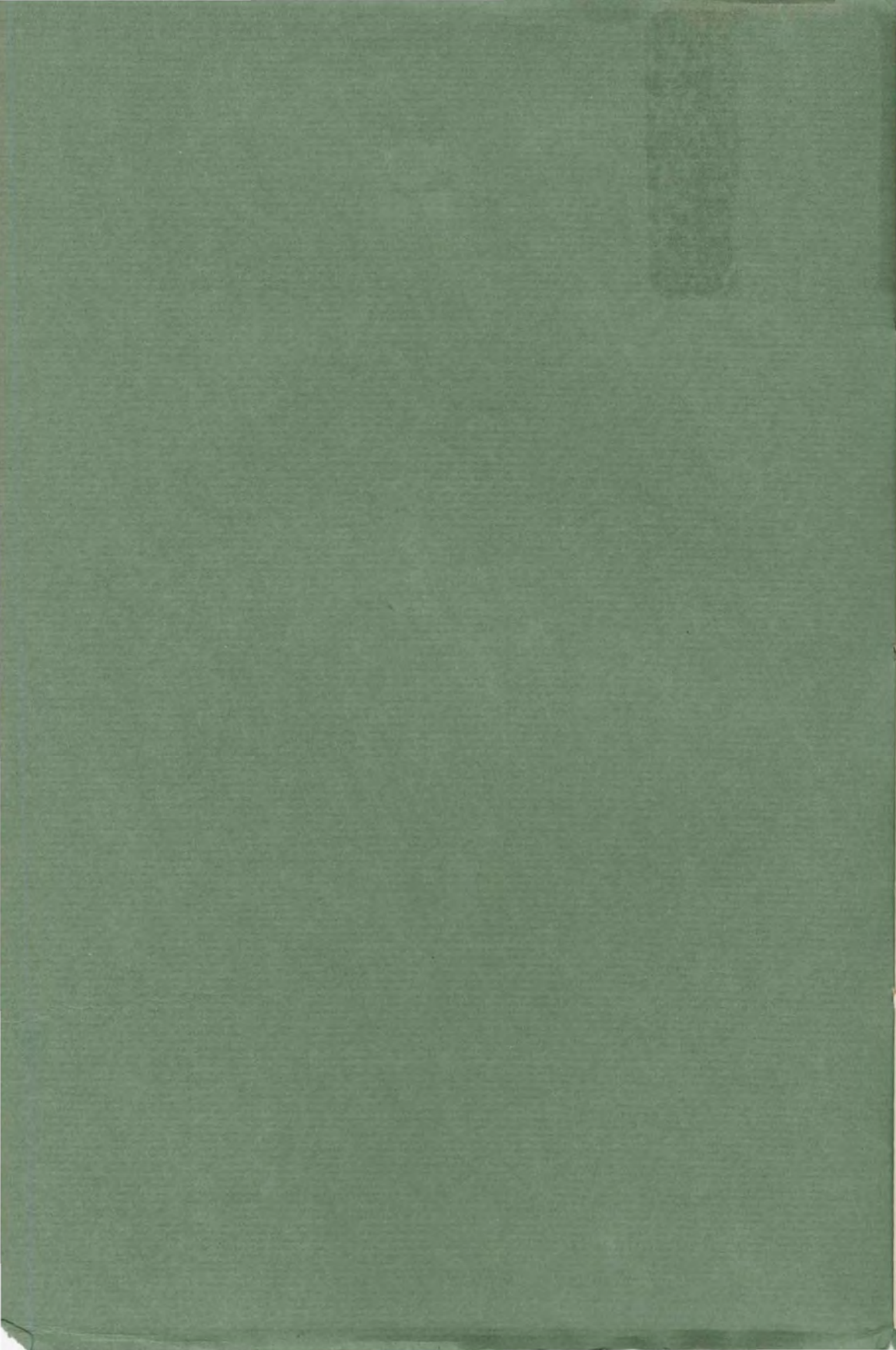
Connecticut Towns



East Windsor

1806

The Acorn Club of Connecticut





Connecticut Towns

East Windsor *in* 1806

By David McClure



The Acorn Club of Connecticut

1949

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Edited by Thompson R. Harlow
Librarian of The Connecticut Historical Society

Biographical Note

DAVID MCCLURE *was born in Newport, Rhode Island, November 7, 1748. He graduated from Yale College in 1769 and was early associated with Eleazer Wheelock and Dartmouth College. In 1786 he was installed as pastor of the First Congregational Society in East Windsor, now South Windsor. The Massachusetts Historical Society elected him a Corresponding Member and in 1798 he contributed an article entitled "Settlement and Antiquities of the town of Windsor," which was published in their Collections 1st Series, Volume 5. His voice failed and he was succeeded in January 1807 by Thomas Robbins, later first librarian of The Connecticut Historical Society. David McClure died June 25, 1820.*

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East Windsor in 1806

Sir

I have not inserted in the inclosed sketches of the history of East Windsor the number of inhabitants, nor the list of the Estates in the parishes. Should I obtain them, I will forward them.

Yours respectively

D. MCCLURE

Having a duplicate Catalogue of Harvard College for this year, please accept the inclosed.

East Windsor Sept. 1806.

Sir

I WAS honored a few years ago, with a printed circular Letter from you, in behalf of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, requesting answers to several articles of inquiry, relative to the history of the town in which I reside.

With pleasure I now forward to you such information, on several of the various subjects proposed as I have *been able to obtain*.

East Windsor is the easterly section of the township of ancient Windsor, separated from the latter by Connecticut river.

The first settlers were from Windsor, and principally, the children and grand children of those who came from England with the Rev. John Wareham, their pastor, and settled on the west side of the river. The lands on both sides were purchased of the Indians, who lived within the bounds of the ancient township. The first settlers purchased, in the first instance, three miles running east from the river, and afterwards five miles, in the same direction. The Indians reserved the right of hunting, cutting timber and planting where they pleased. But none of their descendants have, for a long time, appeared to claim the privilege. None of them now exist. After the destruction of King Philip and his Confederacy in 1675, the people ventured over from the

west side, and began the settlement of East Windsor Anno 1680.

The South Boundary line of East Windsor, which separates it from East Hartford, runs due East from Connecticut river, three and half miles. Thence E. $4^{\circ} 30'$ N. three and half miles. The East boundary is a line running N. 14° E. until it meets the south line of Ellington. Thence W. 7° S. 280 rods. Thence N. 7° E. five miles and eighty rods to Enfield. Thence W. $4^{\circ} 30'$ South, five miles to Connecticut river.

The Connecticut river is the west boundary, and beginning at the south runs in its general course, N. 30° E. to the mouth of Scantic river five and one fourth miles, and from the mouth of Scantic to Enfield, N. 5° E. three and three fourth miles.

Within the original bounds of East Windsor, was included the town of Ellington, on the N. E. and a strip on the S. E. which was set off to the N. parish of Bolton, some years ago. Said strip is $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre & 20 rods in width & nine hundred rods in length.

Ellington was made a parish, by the name of Windsor Goshen, about 1730, and incorporated into a town in 1786.

East Windsor now contains two parishes. The first or south parish, and the North or Scantic parish. The eastern part of the first parish, is a District or Village called Wapping; in which they have the privilege of summer preaching, and are exempted from the payment of rates to the first Society.

East Windsor was made a parish A. 1703 and incorporated into a town A. 1768. Mr. Timothy Edwards was the first minister; ordained A. 1695. Mr. Joseph Perry was ordained colleague pastor with him A. 1755. Mr. Edwards deceased 1758, in the 64th year of his ministry, and in the 89th year of his age. Mr. Perry died A. 1783. David McClure succeeded the Rev. Mr. Perry, and was installed A. 1786.

Scantic was made a parish A. 1752, and the Rev. Thomas Potwine ordained there A. 1754. Wapping was made a

separate district A. 1761. They have never had a settled minister. Members there commune with the first Church. Mr. Potwine deceased A. 1802, and was succeeded by the Rev. Shubael Bartlet, ordained A. 1804.

It is a remarkable instance that there has been a succession of no more than two ministers of the Gospel, besides the present in the first parish, during the long period of one hundred and ten years, from the settlement of the venerable Edwards, to the present time.

The succession of ministers in Ellington, formerly a parish in East Windsor, are, The Rev. John McKinstry, educated at Edinburgh, installed A. 1730, resigned A. 1746, deceased A. 1754, aged 77 years.—Nathaniel Huntington, elder brother of the late Govn. Huntington; ordained 1749, deceased 1756, aged 32 years.—Seth Norton, ordained 1757, deceased 1762, aged 30 years. John Bliss, ordained 1765, dismissed 1781.—Joshua Leonard, ordained 1791, resigned 1798.—Diodate Brockway ordained 1799.

A number of Protestant Presbyterian families came with Mr. McKinstry, from the North of Ireland, and settled in Ellington, and the N. E. corner of Scantic parish. They were a religious and industrious people. Several of their descendents inherit the lands of their ancestors in these towns. The N. E. corner of the town bears the name of Ireland, from being the place of their settlement.

The Rev. John Wareham, and the company who came with him from Dorchester, near Boston, to settle here, arrived at the mouth of Scantic River, in October 1635.¹ It was their intention to make permanent settlement on the east side of the river, on account of more extensive meadow and cleared lands, than there were on the west side.

And here they continued through the first tedious winter; but on the expected rising of the spring floods, being informed by the Indians, that the meadows at that season were overflowed, leaving only a ridge along the margin of the river, they were alarmed, and removed over to the

¹ Some accounts say 1636.

western side, on higher ground, where they made their permanent settlement. One of the company, John Bissell, continued on the east side.

During the first winter, particularly, their sufferings were severe. A supply of provisions, expected to come up the river, failed. They were necessitated to feed on acorns and ground nuts, as a substitute for bread. The pittance of corn which they could procure from the Indians, was altogether insufficient to supply *that necessary article of life*.

Their cattle also perished for want of fodder, or were poisoned by eating the laurel, or other noxious vegetables in the meadows. On these they had placed great dependence. In some measure to repair the loss, John Bissell was sent in the spring to Massachusetts, to procure a small supply. He obtained a few cows which, with assistants, he drove through the wilderness, to the great relief of the suffering settlement. For this laborious and dangerous service; dangerous, as he traveled through a dreary wilderness inhabited by savages; they gave him the right of the Ferry in Windsor, which his descendants now inherit.²

² We follow with veneration the fathers of Connecticut traveling on foot, through a dreary wilderness of savages and wild beasts, to find a settlement here. The God who led Israel from Egypt to Canaan was their Shield and Guide. To him they prayed and sang psalms and hymns as they marched along; and the wilderness, instead of the roarings of beasts of prey and the yells of wild men, resounded, for the first time, with the high praises of *Jehovah*.

It is not now known what particular route they pursued; but the following circumstance may lead to a probable conjecture, as to part of it.

In a conversation with the late aged and respectable Capt. Sabin of Pomfret, he related to me the following discovery, viz. About 40 years ago, he felled a large and ancient oak, about the north line of Pomfret adjoining Woodstock. On cutting within some inches of the heart of the tree, they saw that it had been cut and chipped with some sharp tool, like an ax. Rightly judging that at the time in which it must have been done, the Indians, so far inland were destitute, and ignorant of the use of iron tools; he had the curiosity to count the number of annual circular rings from the said mark to the

There is a small episcopal Society in Scantic parish formed two or three years ago, in consequence of an unhappy contention about a new church. They have no house of worship nor settled minister.

There are twenty school Districts and the same number of school houses. The schools are taught usually one half the year by men and the other by women.

There are four small Social Libraries, containing about four hundred volumes of history, divinity, geography, philosophy and books of amusement.

Within the bounds of East Windsor, the Indians were numerous, when the English first came. Their chief seat was on some small hills near the mouth of Podunk River. It was a Sachemdom and could raise about two hundred fighting men. About five miles north, on Scantic river, was also a considerable tribe; supposed to be allies or tributary to Tontonimo, Sachem of Podunk. The settlers conciliated their good will by fair purchase of land and kind treatment. & They gradually diminished. Such was their thirst for war, that many of them slipped away, and joined the famous Philip of Mount Hope, in his desolations of the new settlements.

They were strongly attached to their pagan superstitions and vices. We have no account that an individual Windsor Indian ever embraced the Christian Religion or received the rite of Baptism.

A Windsor Indian, whose name was Toto, was providentially the means of the preservation of the lives of the people of Springfield, from merciless enemies in 1675. Acquainted with the purpose of Philip, the bloody and ferocious leader of the Indians, against the people of Spring-

bark, and found they were as many as the years which had intervened from the migration of the fathers, to that time. Hence the probability that they journeyed along the north border of Pomfret. And as they travelled by a compas, the conjecture is corroborated by that course being nearly in a direct line from Boston, to the place of their settlement on the river.

field, this friendly Indian communicated his intention of burning the town, and the massacre of the inhabitants, on the following morning. Confiding in his friendship and fidelity, he was sent immediately to the devoted place, to alarm the unguarded inhabitants. By his address he eluded the vigilance of Philip's sentinels, whose motley army lay in ambush near the town; and gave a midnight alarm to the secure inhabitants of their dreadful impending fate. This faithful messenger, it is said, ran to Springfield and back to Windsor in one night, between 30 and 40 miles. As indian ingratitude is proverbial, it is pleasing to find an exception, and to record the gratitude and friendly attachment of an individual. Other instances could be mentioned. To Toto, a memorial of respect is due from the descendants of those worthy ancestors, whose lives, he was the distinguished instrument of preserving from torture and death.

There is but one family of Indians residing in this town; but not descendants of its original inhabitants; and such has been the wandering and mixed condition of their ancestors, that they were themselves ignorant to what tribe they originally belonged.

The rapid diminution and final extinction of numerous tribes of Indians in New England, is a subject of wonder, and perhaps unparalleled in the annals of mankind. The Podunk nation, as before observed, were numerous, at the first coming of the English. They did not emigrate; but unaccountably disappeared with the game of the woods. The final extinction of the Tribe, by information received from aged people, many years ago, was as follows. The last man of the Tribe whose name was Cogger, and who lived in a wigwam in a swamp, not far from the place of the church in the First Society, in a fit of intoxication, murdered the *last* Indian woman, and then put an end to his own life by stabbing himself.

Mysterious are the ways of providence! While the Indians of this continent are left to the uncontrolled indulgence of their appetites and passions, and to pursue the road to self ruin and annihilation, as a people; the divine protection

and prosperity have been wonderfully displayed towards the English Americans; to whom the Sovereign Proprietor of the world, hath given their land for an inheritance. Towards them fearful severity; but towards us, unbounded goodness! A few streams bear their original Indian names as Scantik (pronounced by the Indians Scantough). Podunk, (Podungh) Hockanum. There are no mountains, lakes or ponds in the town.

Little is now known of the religion or mythology of the Indians. The tradition is that they believed a future existence, and that superior beings managed the affairs of the world and the destinies of men and to them they occasionally offered sacrifice. They worshipped, principally, one Almighty Being, whom they called Monetho or Hobbomoko, as the author and the remover of evil. They believed the future punishment of the wicked, as well as the happiness of the good, a dictate of the common sense of mankind, whether pagan or civilized.

There is a tradition that a party of the Mohawks came down to fight the Podunks, after the English came here, and were met by about 300 Windsor Indians, and a battle was fought and a number killed on both sides. Thomas Bissell, son of John, before mentioned, saved the life of a Windsor Indian, who fled to him for protection, while making hay in the meadow, by rolling a cock of hay over him, and thereby secreting him from his pursuing enemy.

For many years the people felt fearful apprehensions of the murderous designs of the Indians. They attended public worship armed on the Sabbath. One man of the name of Elmer, was killed near a garrison house in the south part of the town. Being protected by settlements north and south, on the river, this place did not greatly suffer in the Indian wars. The young men were frequently called out, and marched to the defense of places up the river.

Human bones are found at two of their burying places, one on Podunk river, and the other at Warehouse Point, in the N. W. corner of the town. Several of their rude instruments of husbandry have been found in plowing in the

meadows, such as stone hoes, axes and likewise stone pots and flint arrow heads, &c.

The land here is generally level, interspersed with small hills or swells. The meadow along the river is three fourths of a mile in width, in the South parish, and is narrower in the North, until it terminates at the rapids, at Warehouse Point. The Rapids extends about eighty rods into East Windsor. The land on which the public road runs, gradually slopes into the meadows. The road runs parallel with the meadow, along the high land through the town, commanding a beautiful prospect of the river, the meadows, and distant mountains on the east and west. In the South parish the people generally live on the river road. The houses are about twenty rods apart, and the street there, four and half miles in length.

That each man might have a share of the meadow, the fathers parcelled out the farms from twenty to forty rods or upwards, beginning at the river, and extending easterly three and half miles. By this division each farm possesses variety of soils and a wood lot. The meadows are inclosed in a common fence, and the bounds of each proprietor ascertained by a mere stone or land mark.

The soil is loam, fine sand and beds of clay. It is easy of tillage and produces abundant crops. Within two miles of the river no stones are found in the South parish, except such as have been brought there. In the easterly part of said parish, are hills of red or flesh colored free stone. The quantity supposed to be inexhaustable. They hew easily, and are transported six miles to the river. The meadows are the finest loam, partaking in some places, of the qualities of marl. They appear to have been made by the freshets depositing a rich sediment. Trunks of trees have been found several feet beneath the surface, and decayed leaves and twigs of trees are seen jutting out eight and ten feet below the top of the river bank.

A species of yellow Ochre was discovered, and used for paint in the revolutionary war. By baking, it assumed the colour of spanish red; but was neglected on account of the

labour of separating it from the sand which was incorporated with it.

The land is naturally springy. Water is plenty and good. It is found by digging from 12 to 20 feet. There are a few small aqueducts. The expense of making them is about one dollar a rod.

The various species of oak, white and pitch pine, walnut or hickory, white and rock maple, chestnut, butternut, elms, &c. are the natural growth. The oak in some places succeeds the pine, and vice versa. In the South parish, the timber is increasing, in the North parish, decreasing. In felling oak for building, the old of the moon in March is preferred.

Within 20 years, the price of woodland has risen ten fold. It is now about \$35 per acre. Meadow land has risen about three fold, in the same period. It is about \$80 per acre.

Connecticut river, at this place, is 100 rods in width. It is navigable at low water, for loaded boats of 50 or 60 tons. A flat or sand bar, containing about fifty acres, is gradually moving down, and goes about forty rods, annually. It is bare in the summer. The water is shoal some distance on the north and of some depth on the south end. It moves only when covered with water. The stream then washes along the surface successively until the whole mass is turned over.

The river has increased in width and lost in depth, by its undermining the banks. Seventy and eighty years ago, corn grew where the middle of the river now runs. Twenty four years past Gen. Erastus Wolcott, saved his meadow banks which the freshets were annually, wearing away, by wharfing. The good effects appear by an increase of land below the wharf, as well as above. By this experiment, wharves or piers pushed into the stream, are probably, the most effectual method of narrowing the route of the river, and deepening its channel.

Shad and alewives are caught in plenty in the spring, although not so abundantly as in years past. At a fishing place on the other side of the river, owned by people of this

place, eleven hundred shad have been taken at one haul of the seine, and the last spring eighty four barrels of alewives were caught at one haul. The fishery lasts 6 or 8 weeks; the best in April.

The fresh water being pushed far into the ocean, by the spring floods, draws the fish, in pursuit of a secure retreat, to deposit their spawn. Thus providence brings to our doors, the delicious treasures of the sea; from which inexhausted store house, multitudes of the human race are fed and supported.

Twenty years ago Salmon were taken in great plenty; but they have of late nearly forsaken the river. This is conjectured to be in consequence of the increased number of mill dams on the tributary streams. The failure of this excellent fish has been particularly observable since the erection of the great dam, across Connecticut river, at Hadley Falls. It is said, that in some years, acres of young fish, returning to the sea, and missing their way around the head of the dam, have perished between it and the eastern shore.

Within the limits of the town on the rivers Scantic, Podunk and Hockanum, (a small part of the last runs through the S. E. corner of the town), are, six grist, eight saw and one oil mill, and a carding machinery. At one or two of the grist mills, superfine flour is manufactured.

The species of grain raised, are, Indian corn, rye, wheat, oats and barley. The average quantity from an acre are 25 to 30 bushels of corn, 12 of rye and 18 of wheat. Gen. Wolcott once harvested one hundred bushels of corn from one acre. About one hundred thousand bushels of grain are annually raised in the town.

The price of labour has varied with the value of money. Since the great increase of Bank bills, it has doubled. It is from \$12 to \$15 per month during the summer months, and the rest of the year from 7 to \$10, exclusive of subsistence.

The upland mowing becomes a tough sward in 3 or 4 years. It is then plowed and planted. The dung is either plowed in or put into the hills of corn. Sometimes two crops of corn are taken before it is laid down to grass. It is laid

down, either with winter, or spring grain, and flax. The grasses which do best are herd and clover.

Stable manure is used altogether. Our farmers, satisfied with the fertility of the soil, do not take the trouble to make compost, which would greatly increase the crops, could they be persuaded to attend to it.

Plaster of Paris has been partially tried. It is found to answer well on coarse sandy soil, in the easterly part of the town; but appears not to make much impression on the fine sand and loamy soil, near the main street, particularly in the first parish, and still less in the meadows.

It is found to be profitable to exchange seed between meadow and upland.

The english harvest is about the middle of July. Winter grain is sowed from the 1st of Sept. to the last of Oct.

The grass land in the meadow does not require breaking up with the plow. It is best managed with a spike roller. Several parts of it have produced good crops of grain successively for half a century, without any other manure than what the floods bring on annually.

Quantities of tobacco were formerly raised; but that article, at present, gives place to the more profitable one of corn.

Excellent cider, from trees brought by the first settlers from England, was made here; but the trees are decayed or dead. Some attention, in late years, has been paid to orchards and fruit trees.

There are two gin distilleries, and four of apple brandy. About seven thousand barrels of cider, are made annually.

About 180 ox teams and 100 two horse waggons, are in the town. Several winnowing machines. About 1700 swine. Fences are mostly made of posts and rails.

About 20 families migrate annually, principally into the State of New York; some to NW Connecticut.

There have been two instances of suicide, natives, supposed from insanity.

The first pleasure carriage was a one horse chair, in 1756. The number is now about fifty.

Diseases among cattle, are, principally the horse and horn distempers.

Tow cloth and flannels are manufactured in families, and some of it sent by the merchants to Albany and the northward.

About 50 long boats, carrying about 50 tons each, belong to the town, and ply up and down the river, as far as Windsor, in Vermont and some to Dartmouth College.

There are two ship yards. 4 or 5 vessels from 70 to 300 tons are built annually. The cost of building is about \$25 per ton.

There are two ferries; both private property.

The expense of supporting the poor is about \$500 annually. Various infirmities and old age, are the condition of the objects.

There are about 30 free Blacks. They are, generally, not provident, fond of amusements and strong drink. There are ten inns.

Before the meadows were drained the intermitting fever was annual, and the long fever was common. The most prevalent diseases, for several years, have been pulmonary consumptions, and epilepsies.

The number of souls in East Windsor, at the settlement of Mr. Edwards A. 1695 was about two hundred.

The first settlers were,

Henry Wolcott Esq.	Joseph Drake
Thomas Bissell	Hezekiah Porter
Samuel Tudor	Joseph Skinner
John Stoughton	Samuel Elmer
Joseph Loomis	Capt. Fitch
Matthew Grant	Eben Stiles
John Elsworth	John and Sam Rockwell
John Strong	William Moreton
Nath. Loomis	Samuel Burnham
Samuel Grant, Jun,	Simon Wolcott
James Porter	Jedediah Watson
Humphry Prior	Jeremiah Diggins

Samuel Bissell
Robert Stedman
John Loomis
Joshua Willes
Joseph Coult
Samuel Banckroft

John Moore
Stephen Taylor
John Gaylord
Thomas Sadd
Joseph Phelps
Ammi Trumbull

David Bissell

By natural increase, the inhabitants doubled their number in periods of about 21 years, to the time of the revolutionary war in 1775. By the Census taken in 1774, (Ellington inclusive) the total number was 3002.

The following is the table of ages and sexes at that time.

	Males	Females
Under 10 years of age	481	443
Between 10 and 20	355	335
Between 20 and 70	617	650
Above 70	45	38

People of colour	32	} Total 3002.
Indians	6	

One in 36 above 70.

Whites above 20 —	1350	Married whites	929
“ under 20 —	1614	being about two thirds	of those above 20.

List of the whole of the property in 1733—£12,503

“ exclusive of the Great Marsh	} 1734—	10,832
(now Ellington)		
“ exclusive of “	1744—	12,347
“ of the first Society only	1753—	9,718
“ of the Street £8425 and	} 1767—	10,953
Wapping 2527		

A public road extending from the river to the easterly bounds of the town, twenty rods in width, was laid out by the first settlers; but not being much used, the town, about 18 years ago, sold it, with the reservation of 5 rods, in width, for a road. The first Society funded their part of the avails, for the support of the Gospel, ministry forever; and the North Society funded theirs for the support of Schools.

This town has produced some men of eminent talents and public usefulness.

Roger Wolcott Esq. rose, by his merits, to the chief magistracy of the Colony. Descended of one of the first respectable settlers of Windsor, the family was reduced, as to property, by Indian depredations, and he was brought up to the business of a Weaver. By diligent application to study, the force of his genius surmounted discouragements, and he became an able and eloquent attorney at law. From obscurity he was raised, by the freemen, to the chair of government. He was chosen Governor in 1751-52 and 53.

He was appointed Major General and second in command, under Sir William Pepperill, at the siege and reduction of Louisburgh, in 1745. He was the oldest man in the army (aged 67) except the Chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Moody of York.³

³ In Mr. Moody were united great plainness and simplicity of language and manners, and an ardent piety. His zeal against popery was great. His animated example and exhortations, to the army, gave a wonderful spring to the enterprise. He was a man of faith and prayer, and sometimes spoke with confidence, of the future, events of providence. In his old age, he offered his services, and gave exhortations to the officers and soldiers of the army to *go on, for God would deliver Louisburgh into their hands*. It was a saying of the fathers at that day, that the faith and prayers of Mr. Moody, did more in the reduction of Louisburgh, than the arms of the assailants. His courage and confidence of success, against the followers of Antichrist, inspired the army with an enthusiasm that bid defiance to danger. On getting possession of the town, it was said, he entered the popish chappels, with his hatchet, and hewed down the idolatrous images.

Men of calculating minds condemned the projected enterprise, as wild and romantic. They were astonished at the success.† It was indeed, marvelous, that a small army of undisciplined colony militia, with very little of the necessary apparatus for forming a regular siege, should conquer Cape Breton, and the strong Citadel of Louisburgh, provided and defended by the veteran soldiers of France. "Twenty men only, were killed by the fire of the enemy from the town."

†See, particularly, Douglas's *History of New England*.

The officers of the Connecticut forces (which consisted of 500 men) under him were,

Andrew Burr Esq. Col.	Captains, Elvizur Goodrich
Simon Lothrop Lieu, Col.	David Wooster
Israel Newton Esq. Major	Stephen Lee
	Daniel Chapman
	William Whiting
	Ward
	Robert Dennison
	James Church

He was the author, of a poem containing a brief history of the settlement and sufferings of the Colony, and Gov. Winthrop's negotiations at the Court of King Charles 2d for the establishment of the Colony Charter.⁴

He has left a family manuscript, and devotional pieces in verse and prose, on various subjects, principally sacramental.

⁴ This little piece of historical poetry, has been rescued from oblivion, by its recent republication in the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. It has been a subject of surprise that such a despotic Prince, as King Charles, should give his royal approbation to so free and popular a constitution of government as the Connecticut Charter. It is perhaps in part at least explained by the following circumstance, communicated by very respectable tradition; that a brother of Gov. Winthrop was an officer in the army of Gen. Monk, who was active in the restoration of the King to the British throne. From a principle of gratitude and friendship for the brothers, the King was disposed to grant whatever Governor Winthrop asked.

The Constitution of Government, contained in the Charter, was drawn up at Hartford, by the people or freemen of the then small colony, from 8 or 10 settlements or towns. It is therefore, as democratic a government as perhaps was ever formed; and which the other Colonies and Provinces when revolutioned into States, took, as the model of their respective Constitutions. At a great price, the fathers obtained this freedom for themselves and for their posterity. For the expense attending the Governor's agency to obtain the Royal sanction to the Charter, the, then, poor and suffering Colony, paid two thousand bushels of wheat, and twelve hundred bushels of Pease.

Msc. Letter of Gov.

John Winthrop to the Hon. Sam. Wyllys (London, May 1662)

Governor Wolcott had several sons who were men of eminence; particularly, Roger, Alexander, Erastus and Oliver. Of these great men, the first, was said to be the greatest. Roger, was one of the Judges of the County Court, and died in the beginning of his rising fame and prospects of great usefulness.

Alexander was educated at Yale College A. 1731. He was a respectable physician, & was employed in public business. He possessed great strength of mind, and an eloquence and energy in speaking on public occasions, that commanded admiration.

General Erastus Wolcott, was brought up a farmer. He possessed a sound judgment and depth of penetration, that fall to the lot of few. He served the public in various important offices. In the revolutionary war, he commanded a regiment of the Connecticut troops, and under Gen. Washington, was an active assistant in the works on the heights of Dorchester, which eventually compelled the British army and fleet to evacuate the Town and harbour of Boston. He was one of the Judges of the Hon. Superior Court; previous to which, he was, for many years, a member of the Legislature of the State. In opening and elucidating difficult and perplexing cases of legislation, with clearness and precision, perhaps, he was not excelled.

His excellency Oliver Wolcott L. L. D. was educated at Yale College A. 1747. Was a member of — Congress and an able advocate for the Declaration of Independence, which separated the Colonies from Great Britain. He was a wise Statesman and an inflexible Patriot—Was elected Governor of the State in 1796 and died Dec. 1, 1797.

William Wolcott Esq. was educated at Yale College A. 1734. Was several years one of the Judges of the County Court, and an acting Justice of the Peace to old age. Deceased 1799, Aged 88 years. He, and his cousin, Judge Erastus Wolcott, were the pillars of the church and Society.

and the Majestrates in Hartford, on the Records in the office of the Secretary of the Colony.

When destitute of a preacher on the Sabbath they generally presided and conducted the public worship. Twenty years ago, this was, also, the laudable practice of the churches round about us.

A tribute of respect is due to distinguished female characters. Permit me to mention that the first minister, the Rev. Timothy Edwards had a numerous family of ten daughters, who were in great reputation, in their day, for good sense, virtue and female accomplishments. Their mother was the daughter of the Rev. Mr. Stoddard of Northampton. The house of their venerable parents was the seat of religion and urbanity, of "white robed innocence" and the graces. Young ladies from abroad resorted thither, to be instructed in the useful and ornamented accomplishments of the sex. The greater part of them were married to respectable gentlemen, in the, then, Colony. Their only brother was Mr. Jonathan Edwards, educated at Yale College A. 1720, and afterwards President of the College at Princeton, New Jersey. For strength and force of original genius in metaphysical researches—profound science—eminent piety and extensive usefulness, his life and writings gave him pre-eminent rank among the greatest men of the last century.

The Rev. Isaac Stiles, the father of the late reverend and learned Dr. Ezra Stiles, President of Yale College, was educated at Yale College A. 1722, and settled in the ministry in North Haven.

The Rev. Samuel Tudor, educated at Yale College A. 1728, and settled in the ministry in the Second Church in West Windsor.

The Rev. Jonathan Elmer, educated at Yale College A. 1747, and settled in the ministry, in New Jersey.

Mr. Matthew Rockwell educated at Y. College, A. 1728, a preacher of the Gospel and a physician.

Elihu Tudor M. D. educated at Yale College A. 1750. Living, and a practising surgeon and physician.

Other gentlemen, natives of the place, have received a liberal education; some of whom are living in the town.

The first temporary church was near the old burying ground, first Society, built about 1690. The second near the same; built A. 1717. Forty feet square. The third, one and one-fourth mile south, built A. 1760. 60 by 45 feet. Paid for principally by the sale of tobacco.⁵

⁵ The following minutes are from the town and parish records.

At a meeting of the inhabitants on the East side of the great river, in Windsor, for the settling of Mr. Timothy Edwards, in the work of the ministry, Sept. 25, 1695. The names of the settlers have been mentioned.

At a General Court held at Hartford, May 12, 1698. ordered by this Court, that those that inhabit on the East side of the great River, in the township of Windsor, and those who shall hereafter inhabit there, shall pay their equal proportion with the rest of their neighbors for the maintenance of the worship of God, in that place so long as they shall there inhabit.

Vera Copia Test
Eleazar Kimberly Secry

Octb. 12, 1699. The Court ordered that they should have liberty to choose three or four men, for a Committee to order the affairs of that Society, and also Collectors to gather rates.

1700. The Town, (both sides the River) voted to give Mr. Edwards some land on the East side.

1702. On the East side, "Voted, that every man and all the teams shall spend one day to cut and cart wood for Mr. Edwards, and if that doth not provide wood enough for one year, then, that the Committee shall have power, to call out the men and teams another day."

1717. Voted Mr. Edwards Salary £ 100, or in Indian corn @ 2/. Rye 2/6. Wheat 4/.

1722. Voted Salary £ 120. Wheat 5/. Rye 3/6. Corn 2/6.

1727. Voted Salary £ 140. Wheat 7/. Rye 5/. Corn 3/.

1729. Salary £ 150—Wheat 8/. Rye 6/. Corn 4/.

1731. Dec. Voted to excuse the inhabitants who have hired "Mr. McKinstry from their rates to Mr. Edwards."*

* Mr. McKinstry was sensible and pious; and a sound divine of the School of Calvin. He was possessed of property, and built a large, and, for that day, elegant house. At his house the first settlers met to worship, on the Sabbath. Among the first settlers of Ellington

An extraordinary instance of presence of mind, in saving the life of a drowning person, in this town, may be useful to record.

Mr. Jonathan Bissell, who was an aged man at my first acquaintance with him, several years previous, was piloting some travellers on the ice, over the river, a recent snowfall having obscured the path. A lad who lived with Mr. Bissell followed his master. A hole had been cut through the ice, a little from the shore for the conveniency of watering cattle. The boy stepped aside to the hole, his foot slipped, and he instantly disappeared. The travellers ran to the spot, but the stream had carried him under the ice. They gave him up in hopeless despair. But not so Mr. Bissell. He was, perhaps, of all living men, the slowest in thought and motion; but the alarming occasion seemed to rouse into action some dormant faculties, which he had never shown before. He hastened to the bank and seizing a billet of wood, went about five rods below the hole, and in the course of the water, with which he was well acquainted, having attended the ferry from his youth, and exerting all his strength, by repeated blows, the ice gave way. And stooping down to watch his coming, he immediately saw the lad, and seizing him, hauled him up on the ice, to appearance dead.

were Capt. Daniel Elsworth, Daniel Eaton, Nath. Taylor, Simon Chapman, Isaac Davis, John Burroughs, Samuel Pinney, Nath. Davis, the McKinney's and McCrea's.

Mr. McKinstry was a plain man in his manners and in his public performances. His pronunciation partook of the Scottish broad dialect. The people made more speedy progress, in supposed refinements than their aged pastor, whose language and habits had been formed in Scotland. They neglected him and he resigned his charge of them; but preached occasionally, to those of them, who could appreciate his worth, and in the churches round about.

He had a son who settled in the ministry, in a parish in Springfield, Mass. His grandson the Rev. John Elsworth, was minister of the church in Saba in the West Indies. The rising hopes of the church in the extensive usefulness of so pious and promising a youth, were buried with him, in his early death.

The lad was about 11 years of age, and had been under the ice 6 or 8 minutes. In about two hours he was as well as usual. Of the particular process of resuscitation to life, I have not been informed.

To rescue from oblivion the following fragment of Indian History may be gratifying to the curious.

The subsequent extract from the ancient Records of the Colony, explains the nature of the transaction.

For the majestrates of the Colony, in its early beginning, to be the chosen arbitrators of high contentions, between savage warlike nations, shews the confidence of the Indians in the justice of the English; we likewise discover the very imperfect knowledge which pagans or people in a state of nature, have of the common principles of distributive Justice.

At a General Court at Hartford, in May, in the year of our Lord 1656.

That upon a murther of a Sachem of Connecticut dwelling near Mattapeaset (Middletown) by a young man called Weaseapano; Sequassin complained to the majestrates of Hartford, of the wrong that the Podunk Indians did to him in entertaining and maintaining of him against all justice, which said Sequassin took Uncas in to him for help, to be revenged for the said Sachem's death, who was enraged with the like accident of entertaining a murtherer, that came from Uncas to the said Podunk who complained likewise to the majestrates of several wrongs done to him by Tontonimo, especially his inticing so many of his men, and their protecting a murtherer. And

Thereupon, the Majestrates ordered, that the Sachems of both sides should appear at Hartford at the General Court: who all appearing,

Sequassin first declared of the said fact, done by a mean fellow, upon one that was allied to him a Great Sachem, and so Uncas and Foxin insisted in many words.

The Governor pressed to know what satisfaction they required, who answered and pressed hard to have ten men put to death of *his* friends who was the murtherer;

the other Sachems pled it unjust, because the Sachem that was slain had murdered the young man's uncle wilfully.

The Court, many of them spoke their minds to and fro. The Governor shewed the Indians what our law is in such cases, that only the murtherer or any that are accessory to it should be punished; and so he and many deputies expressed both sides for peace, and not to fight upon such a quarrel.

The Podunk Sachem offered to give wampum in way of satisfaction which wholly was rejected. Whereupon the Court spent some time to persuade to peace. Then they fell to be satisfied with the death of six men. The Court wearied with their speeches, pressed the Podunk Indians to deliver up the murtherer, the which Tontonimo promised, but privately stole out of the Court and went with the rest of the Sachems to Podunk Fort. Whereupon both the English and Indians were offended and agreed to send a messenger to deliver up the murtherer. In the mean time the Court appointed four deputies, to be a Committee to treat with the Sachems of both sides to see what could be done for peace. The Committee brought Uncas to accept the murtherer only for full satisfaction, but the Podunk Indians said they could not deliver up the said murtherer; [his] friends were so many and potent in the Fort.

In the afternoon the Committee and Sachems made known to the Court; who then agreed that by no means the English would be engaged on either side of their quarrels but would leave them to themselves.

Whereupon the Governor made a long speech desiring to be at peace one with another and take wampum. If they would not, then he declared the Court would not hinder them, but left them to themselves, and whatsoever fell out afterwards upon either of them, they brought upon themselves. But so when they engaged that they should not fight upon this side of the River of Hartford, nor hurt any of the English houses, or anything of the people of the other side of the River.

More to the same effect spoken by the Governor and also by some deputies.

Some expressions many times in the agitation thereof, was spoken, that might carry that sense of advising and counselling of Uncas not to fight, as some apprehended then, but in conclusion the Governor as the mouth of the Court declared his mind fully to the Indians of both sides as aforesaid.

Witness my hand this 20th of Aug. 1657.

Jonathan Brewster.

The Court voted that this relation should be transcribed, and asserted under the Secretary's hand, that to their satisfaction was evidence in Court to be a true relation. At, or about this time the Court consisted of the following gentlemen,

John Winthrop, Esq. Governor

Thomas Wells, Esq. Lieut. Gov.

Mr. John Webster

Major John Mason

Messrs. Cullick—Clark

Samuel Wyllys—Talcott

Nath. Gould

——— Gosmer) possibly from

——— Ogden) Long Island

——— Steel—Phelps—Gaylord,

——— Trott—Robbins

Jonath Brewster—J. Deming

Matt. Canfield—Ja. Morgan

John Wells—Rich. Butler,

Sam. Gibbs—Edw. Andrews

Bigatt Egglestone—Sam. Church

Tho. Burnham—John Bailey

John Root—Tho. Fitch

John North—Wm. Ventris

Matt. Woodruff

Ja. Bird—Jos. Bird

Rich. Wakely—And. Sandford

Josiah Elsworth—Nath. Winchell

Francis Hall—Simon Lobdell
Geo. Wolcott—John Harrison
Enoch Buck—John Belden
Joseph Smith—Sam. Wright
Ja. Treat—John Deming, Jun.
Nath. Graves—Matt. Treat
John Palmer—Jonah Smith
Sam. Belden—Henry Palmer
Tho. Dickinson—Sam. Wells
Rob. Foot—Joseph Dickinson⁶

As many Indians as English were seen at Hartford at the annual elections. It was a time of a kind of Fare with them, to barter peltry, furs and wampum, for ammunition, blankets and various articles.

The solemn arbitration of the English, on the disputes of the Indians, as now mentioned, proving ineffectual, the tradition, as related to me by the late aged and Hon. George Wylls Esq. and communicated to him by his honored father, was,

That Uncas came with his warriors, and was met by the Podunks probably not far from Hockanum river, and a bloody battle was expected, but the numbers on both sides being about equal, and the probable consequence of an encounter, the extermination of both; Uncas prudently withdrew with a threatening message to Tontonimo, "that if he persisted in detaining the murderer, he would send to the Mohawks to come and destroy him."

The Mohegan Sachem accomplished his purpose by the following stratagem. He dispatched to Podunk one of his faithful warriors, furnished with some Mohawk weapons of war, with orders to set fire, in the night, to a house in the vicinity of the Indian Fort at Podunk, leave the weapons on the ground, and make the best of his way home. The Indian executed his commission, and in the morning the

⁶ The towns and settlements at this time were few and the Deputies numerous. Were they elected? or did the Freemen attend court at their own option, and as many as inclined?

Podunks were dreadfully alarmed at seeing the Mohawk weapons of Death; concluding that Uncas was about to put his threat in execution. They sent him the murderer immediately and made peace.

Some particulars of these historical sketches are derived from respectable traditionary sources. There may be an incorrectness in some of them, as oral traditions are liable to a deviation from the true state of facts and events; but I have not admitted any, of the authenticity of which I had doubts.

Should the fruits of my labour in collecting them, be in any measure serviceable to the useful and laudable design of the Society, I shall be gratified.

With sentiments of respect for the Honorable Society, and yourself, personally,

I am, Sir,

Your obedient and
hble. servant

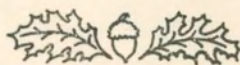
DAVID McCLURE

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Academy of Arts and Sciences.*

Nineteenth Publication



One hundred and two copies printed, seventy-five for sale

Typographic arrangement by Carl Purington Rollins

Printed by Case, Lockwood & Brainard, Hartford, Connecticut

Number 18



